

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

May 11, 2005

PRESS RELEASE

On May 10, 2005, the State Ethics Commission and Albemarle Equities, LLC ("Albemarle") entered into the attached Stipulation and Order. The Stipulation and Order fully resolves a complaint dated May 10, 2005 (Docket No. 2005-7) filed by Ethics Commission Principal Attorney Alice M. Sexton against Albemarle alleging violations of the gift ban in the Code of Ethics for Lobbyists for providing a gift to a public official in excess of the legal limits.

In particular, the Complaint alleged that in February, 2004, Albemarle was a registered lobbyist in Connecticut. The Complaint further alleged that at that time, one of Albemarle's principal members, Philip Schonberger, permitted a public official and her spouse to stay without charge at a condominium Mr. Schonberger was renting in Vermont, while Mr. Schonberger, his wife and some friends were also staying there. The Complaint further alleged that the fair market value of one night's stay at the condominium was \$500.00 per night, or \$166.66 per night per couple.

The Code of Ethics prohibits lobbyists and those acting on behalf of lobbyists from giving gifts, as defined, to public officials, state employees, and members of their staffs and immediate families. In general, a gift is defined as anything having a value in excess of \$10, provided the aggregate value of all things provided by a donor in a calendar year to a recipient does not exceed \$50 per year. While there was evidence that Mr. Schonberger and the public official had known each other socially for at least thirty years, the lobbyist gift ban does not make exceptions for gifts between friends.

As a result of the Stipulation and Order, Albemarle is required to pay a civil penalty of \$1,000 to the State Ethics Commission.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CALL:

Alice M. Sexton
Principal Attorney
(860) 566-4472 x 305

or
Hugh Macgill
Chairman
State Ethics Commission
(860)570-5484



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

DOCKET NO. 2005-7 : STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
IN THE MATTER OF A : 20 TRINITY STREET
COMPLAINT AGAINST : HARTFORD, CT 06106
ALBEMARLE EQUITIES, LLC : MAY 10, 2005

STIPULATION AND ORDER

Pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. §4-177(c), the State Ethics Commission ("Commission") and the Respondent, Albemarle Equities, LLC (hereinafter "the Respondent"), agree to settle this matter in the manner described below:

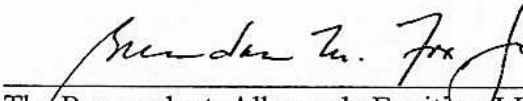
1. WHEREAS, on May 10, 2005, the Commission filed a Complaint against the Respondent alleging that it violated the Code of Ethics for Lobbyists, Conn. Gen. Stat. §1-91 *et seq.*
2. WHEREAS, the Commission finds that the Respondent violated the Code of Ethics for Lobbyists, Conn. Gen. Stat. §1-91 *et seq.* as alleged in the Complaint.
3. WHEREAS, the Respondent states that its principal member, Philip Schonberger, was a longtime friend of the gift recipient, and the gift recipient was a longtime friend of the condominium owner, Richard Suisman. The Respondent further states that its principal member was aware that the gift recipient had stayed at said condominium as a guest of the condominium's owner, by virtue of their mutual friendship, on other occasions over the course of many years, well before the Respondent paid to rent the condominium for the 2003-2004 season. Based on the foregoing, the Respondent enters into this Stipulation and Order, without admitting that it has violated any law, or otherwise committed any improper act, and Respondent submits that this is a compromise of a disputed claim and that any payment made is not to be construed as an admission of liability on the part of the Respondent or its principal member. The Respondent is entering into this Stipulation for the sole purposes of avoiding the time and expense of litigation and of resolving the controversy over this subject.
4. WHEREAS, the Respondent waives any rights it may have under Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 1-93, 1-93a, 1-98 and 1-80, including the right to a hearing or any appeal in this case, and agrees with the Commission to an informal disposition of this matter.

Phone: (860) 566-4472 Fax: (860) 566-3806
20 Trinity Street - Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1660
Website: <http://www.ethics.state.ct.us>
An Equal Opportunity Employer

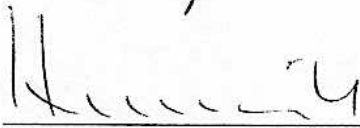
5. WHEREAS, this Stipulation and Order concludes the Commission's investigation into the conduct of the Respondent.

NOW THEREFORE, and in consideration of the above, pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. §4-177(c), the State Ethics Commission enters, and the Respondent agrees to, the following orders in lieu of any other action regarding this matter:

1. The Respondent shall pay a civil penalty of \$1,000.00 to the State Ethics Commission within thirty (30) days of the signing of this Stipulation and Order by all parties; and
2. The Respondent shall henceforth comply with the Codes of Ethics for Public Officials.


The Respondent, Albemarle Equities, LLC
By: *Brendan M. Fox, Jr.*
Its: *Attorney*

May 10, 2005
Date


State Ethics Commission
By: Hugh C. Macgill
Its Chairperson

10 May 2005
Date